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STATE DOCUMENTS

Montana's Foster Parent

JUL 12 1974

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Ann Burds — Social and Rehabilitation Services, 836 Front Street, Helena, Montana

February March '74

Dear Foster Parents:

"It is the person who has done nothing who is certain nothing can be done." Makes sense, doesn't it?

Do you think that nothing can be done about an increase in foster care monthly board payments, improving communication between social workers and foster parents, the necessity for educational training sessions for prospective foster parents, clothing allowances, liability insurance, subsidized adoption, understanding run-away teenagers, and standard rules and regulation requirements for licensing? Well --- you're right, nothing can be done until enough genuinely interested foster parents unite. Above are only a few of the many things that can be accomplished through a strong foster parent association.

There are three kinds of foster parent organizations available. One, the local association which is formed on a county level for the purpose of discussing and improving foster care in the situations that pertain to your area. Secondly, there is now a Montana State Foster Parent Organization, Inc., which will be everything that a local association is - only the input will be much more varied. Since there will be more members in this organization, a strong lobbying group can be formed to pass foster care legislation, liability insurance will be available at group rates, a resource library can be started --- the list is endless! There is more information on the newly formed state organization on an inside page. Finally, the National Foster Parent Association covers a much broader area with even broader interests. This association is sponsoring the conference in Spokane and there is more information on it inside also.

I happened to come across a poem that was written in the B. C. Federation of Foster Parent Association Newsletter which, I feel, applies to Montana as well.

WHICH ARE YOU?

Are you an actual member, the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meeting and mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home and criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to be the kind that just belong?
Do you voluntarily help the guiding stick?
Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the "clique"?
Come to meetings often and help with hand and heart.
Don't just be a member --- but take an active part.
Think this over, member, you know right from wrong.
Are you an active member, or do you "just belong"?

So, let's get going! There's alot of work to be done and the sooner it's started - the better. Please let me know if I can be of any help; that's what I'm here for!

Ann Burds

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930 East Lyn[illegible] Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

"LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH"

"Love is Not Enough" is the theme of the Fourth National Foster Parent's Association Conference being held in Spokane, Washington, April 25, 26, 27, and 28, 1974. Deligates from all of the fifty states will have an opportunity to preview Expo '74', the Environmental World's Fair scheduled to open May 4, 1974.

The over 1500 social workers and foster parents who will be attending this conference will have the opportunity to participate in institutes and workshops devoted to understanding the problems faced by children who cannot live in their own homes.

Participating in the institutes will be John Milner, Beatrice Garrett, Mary Reistroffer, and many other outstanding professionals in the Child Welfare field. In-depth study of an inter-community development of a child abuse clinic, recruitment of foster homes, unique problems of inter-cultural foster care placement, orientation and in-service training for foster parents, foster parent-agency relationships, the development of group homes and foster parenting as a vocation. Other workshops and institutes will cover many subjects of particular interest to foster parents and child placement staff.

If you are interested in attending, contact your county social services department immediately. They may have funding available to send a designated number of foster parents and social workers to the conference.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Representative Dick Shoup has introduced a bill in legislature to provide a commemorative foster care stamp. Because of his interest shown in foster care, he has been invited to be the closing speaker at the National Conference in Spokane. If you can't make it to the conference, but would like to thank him for his efforts, his address is:

Dick Shoup
House of Representatives
Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

MUST WE KNOW?

Must we know what everything means?
The smell of a rose, the murmer of streams?
Or the light of stars, or the hush of the night?
Or the song of the thrush, or the ocean's might?

Must we try to explain the song that lingers?
Or the thrill that leaps to the tip of our fingers
When our hand is clasped in the hand of a friend
And life is changed from that hour to its end?

For me it is enough to say
That something beautiful passed my way.

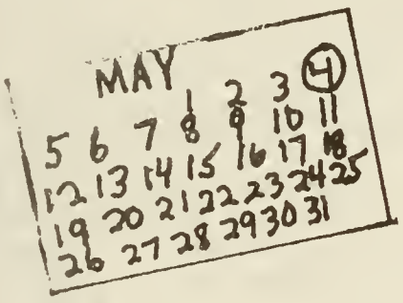
Ida Catherine Rohlf

"IRISH TOAST"

May you be in Heaven a half hour
before the devil knows you're dead.

May the road rise with you,
And the wind be always at your back;
And may the Lord hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Irish Saying------



STATE MEETING

The State Foster Parent Organization Steering Committee held a meeting February 23, at St. Thomas Children's Home in Great Falls.

Some changes were made in the By-Laws concerning the rate of dues, quorum, and other funding. The By-Laws were approved as amended and a copy will be available for everyone attending the state meeting in May.

Transportation to the National Conference was discussed. It appears that the state of Montana will be well represented in Spokane. We are still considering the possibility of chartering a bus if enough foster parents and social workers from the area are interested.

The state organization will have a display at the conference. Bumper stickers, buttons, newsletters, match books, and envelope stickers will be exhibited and all profits will go to the State Organization.

The Articles of Incorporation have been written and submitted to the Secretary of State. A charter with the Articles attached has been issued and will also be presented at the state meeting in May. We are now filing for IRS tax exempt status.

Each of the representatives talked about the special events that their local associations were planning for National Foster Children's Week. Many excellent ideas were exchanged. The State Organization will also ask Governor Judge to proclaim Foster Children's Week and ratify the Bill of Rights for Foster Children.

More definite plans were made for the State Meeting, May 4th. Election of officers will be first on the agenda. A Nominating Committee is presently drawing up this list. After the election, a business meeting will follow. Several possible speakers are now being contacted also. The meeting will take place at the First Presbyterian Church, 535 N. Ewing in Helena, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mark it on your calendar now! As soon as a complete agenda is drawn up, this will be sent to all the foster parents and social workers in the state. Plan on attending as it will definitely be worth the time and effort. I'll even personally guarantee that last statement!

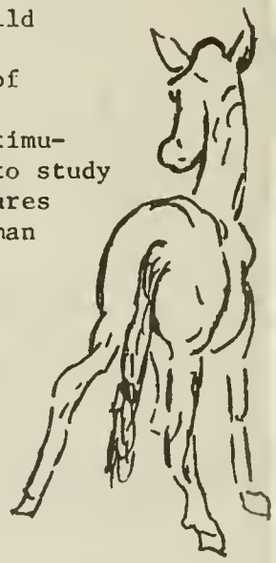
CHILDREN'S CARE OF PETS

Besides the great pleasure a child derives from owning and caring for a pet, there is, of course, the permanent value of learning to accept and carry out the responsibilities of training and daily care which are so necessary for success with an animal. No one has the figures on the number of animals which have been brought enthusiastically into the house and have soon died or become unmanageable because no one has known how to care for them, but the number of such mishaps is undoubtedly staggeringly large. Careless treatment is obviously hard on the animals, but it is also extremely bad for the child involved. Either the child feels a deep disappointment and heartbreak over the death of the animal, or, worse still, in order to protect himself, he hardens his heart and closes his imagination and sensitivity to the feelings of others. A child who learns to understand and treat an animal fairly, and to be self-controlled and patient with it, is getting invaluable training in dealing with people in the same way.

All this sounds very solemn, but it is intended as a plea to you not to allow your child lightheartedly to bring any sort of pet into the home unless you have time to stand back of him and see that he learns how to take care of it and treat it kindly.

A large part of the fun and interest of a pet for a child is in his considering it his own, and being the one to feed and care for it. But no child knows how to do this instinctively, and no child can be depended upon to follow out a daily routine without supervision and training. So you will need to be alert in the background to take up the slack, as you do in other matters. I hope that you and your child will take advantage of the many resources in your local library's children's section about the care, understanding, and appreciation of animal pets before selecting a pet for your family.

A pet can amuse, protect, entertain, and educate. A pet can stimulate, and a pet can soothe. A pet can be many things: the chance to study another living creature close at hand, an initiation into the pleasures of collecting, or a living example of the bond that exists between man and all his fellow creatures.



THE LATEST ON THE LOCAL SCENE

Great Falls and Sidney have both held election of officers for their new associations and are planning programs for the '74' monthly meetings.

Missoula, Malta, and Glasgow have held organizational meetings and elected a temporary chairman. There was a fantastic turnout at their meetings. Keep it up!

I will be attending a meeting in Miles City in early March to give them some direction for starting an association.

The Helena Association has seen an improvement in attendence at monthly meetings and hopes to continue bigger and better than ever.

Kalispell and Billings are holding their regular monthly meetings and continuing the fine accomplishments as they have in the past.

Lewistown, Bozeman, Livingston, and Butte have all received association kits and will hopefully be making some progress REAL SOON.

I was unable to contact anyone in Havre at the time of this writing, so I can only assume that their association is strengthening. Sure hope I'm not wrong!

I told a boy he could leap fences
and he soared over mountains

I told a boy he was stupid
and to his ignorance he was chained

I told a boy he could laugh at life
and he laughed at himself

I told a boy he couldn't fly
and his wings never grew

I told a boy he could make it
and he never looked back

I told a boy he couldn't trust
and he could not trust himself

I told a boy he could love
and he was loved in return

I told a boy he was a failure
and he tore out his heart in final payment

I told a boy he was a joy
and jubilance followed him

I told a boy he had to kill
and he died inside

I told a boy he could see
and he searched the heavens in wonderment

I told a boy he should obey without question
and he followed the Devil to Hell

I told a boy he could trust in himself
and others trusted him

I told a boy he could understand
and he taught me about life

I told a boy he should listen to no one
and he told me to go to Hell.

- Marion Steele

NATIONAL FOSTER CHILDREN'S WEEK

March 31 through April 6 is a week dedicated to foster children. During this week, foster parents throughout the state should make an effort to alert the community to the needs of foster children, to the foster care services provided locally, and to the necessity of more foster homes. A few ideas to honor this week are:

*Write editorials in your local newspaper.
*Have your city mayor proclaim Foster Children's Week.
*TV and Radio spot announcements.
*Foster children's art displays in local stores.

Besides the above; copies of the Bill of Rights for Foster Children, Posters, and Brochures are all available at the State SRS office if anyone so wishes. This is a great opportunity to give special attention to your foster children. Take advantage of it.

Anyone who is interested in starting a Want Ads column in this newsletter may do so by sending any items to me:

Ann Burds
State Social & Rehabilitation Services
Box 1723
Helena, Montana 59601

The items could be wanted, for sale, give away, or exchange. Also, everyone is invited to write articles about their local association activities and submit them for the newsletter.

If you have questions about tax reporting and foster care, call your local IRS Information Office. They are most willing to answer your questions.

State of Montana
Social and Rehabilitation Services
P.O. Box 1723
Helena, Montana 59601

ATTN: ANN BURDS

FIRST CLASS